

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALEXANDRIA 0189

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EG XF PINS
SUBJECT: GOE ATTITUDE TOWARD PALESTINIANS

REF: CAIRO 06450

1. DR. FAROUK GARRANA, CHAIRMAN OF THE ALEXANDRIA ORGANIZATION OF THE MISR PARTY, GAVE ME SOME INTERESTING BACKGROUND ON EVENTS PRECEDING THE NEW GOE ATTITUDE TOWARD PALESTINIANS IN EGYPT . (REFTEL).

2. DR. GARRANA SAID THAT THE SUBJECT HAD COME UP DURING A CELEBRATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY ON FEB. 25, ATKARMOUZ (ALEXANDRIA), PM MAMDOUH SALEM'S HOME DISTRICT. ACCORDING TO GARRANA, THE PALESTINIANS HAD BEEN MENTIONED IN ONE ADDRESS MADE ON THE OCCASION, AND THERE WAS STRONG REACTION AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS AT THAT TIME. LATER, IN HIS SPEECH TO THE GROUP, MR. SALEM RESPONDED BY POINTING OUT THAT THE GOE WAS SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS AS A PEOPLE AND NOT THEIR "FAT"LEADERS OR TERRORISTS. GARRANA IMPLIED THAT THE LOCAL REACTION AT THE 02/25 CELEBRATION WAS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO PROPOSE STEPS AGAINST PALESTINIANS.

3. DR. GARRANA ADDED THAT RECENT GOE PROPOSALS TO TAKE AWAY SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FROM PALESTINIANS, HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED
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BY THE PEOPLE AND WAS A MOVE THAT HAD BEEN FORESHADOWED FOR SOME TIME. HE EXPLAINED THAT IN THE PAST, EGYPTIAN SYMPATHIES HAD BEEN VERY MUCH WITH THE PALESTINIANS, AND EGYPTIANS FELT THAT THEY SHOULD SHARE WITH THEM WHAT LITTLE THEY HAD. OVER THE YEARS, HOWEVER, THEY HAD NOT SEEN ANY BENEFIT TO THEM FROM THIS POLICY, NO THANKS AND NO HELP FOR EGYPT; BUT THEY DID SEE PALESTINIAN STUDENTS ADMITTED FREELY TO ALREADY CROWDED EGYPTIAN SCHOOLS AND

UNIVERSITIES, OFTEN WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, AND WEALTHY PALESTINIANS CARRYING ON BUSINESS VERY SUCCESSFULLY. EGYPTIANS WERE NO LONGER SURE THAT PALESTINIANS NEEDED THEIR HELP, OR THAT THE ASSISTANCE EGYPT WAS GIVING WAS IN FACT GOING TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE RATHER THAN TO THEIR "FAT" LEADERS. RECENT EVENTS HAD BROUGHT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ACT AT THIS TIME.

4. COMMENT: IN ADDITION TO HIS POSITION AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ALEXANDRIA ORGANIZATION OF THE MISR PARTY, DR. GARRANA IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE ASU AND CHAIMAN OF THE ALEXANDRIA LOCAL COUNCIL. WHEN THE ASU HAD A LOCAL (ALEXANDRIA) COMMITTEE, HE WAS CHAIRMAN OF THAT COMMITTEE. DR. GARRANA, ASIDE FROM THE GOVERNOR, IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST POLITICALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE IN ALEXANDRIA, AND I BELIEVE THAT HIS OBSERVATIONS ARE REASONABLY ACCURATE AND TRUSTWORTHY. MCCLELLAND

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